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## Global Perspectives on the United States: A Nation By Nation Survey (Review)

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★ **Global Perspectives on the United States: A Nation By Nation Survey.**

**Ed. by David Levinson and Karen Christensen.**

2v. 2007. 718p. illus. Berkshire, \$275 (9781933782065). 327.73009.

**W**orldviews of the U.S. have changed over time, particularly since 9/11 and the war in Iraq. Levinson and Christensen and a worldwide editorial board provide insight into the views of and perspectives on the U.S. and its government, people, policies, and culture. Although the editors had hoped to determine these perspectives based on key historical events such as the American Revolution, World Wars I and II, and the founding of the UN, they discovered that most nations form opinions of the U.S. by answering two questions—What has the U.S. done for or to us lately? and What may the U.S. do for or to us in the future? To answer these questions, more than 100 experts analyzed public statements, editorials and articles in the media, books, organizational reports, and their own observations and experiences to compile each nation's article. When the above resources were not available, surveys and interviews were used. The articles are based on opinions, whether of government officials, writers, or the people of a nation.

Some 140 articles represent many countries and regions in the world, including Afghanistan, the Caribbean, Iran, Iraq, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe. Each article is written in a standardized format to include the following: an introduction, a statistical profile, "History of Relations with the United States," "Perspectives on the United States," and further reading (including many Internet resources). Sidebars are scattered throughout the two volumes and provide biographies of important authors and journalists whose writings influenced their fellow citizens, biographies of U.S. political figures, pivotal events and documents in world history, and excerpts from primary texts. A list of entries, an index, a world map, general sources of information, and a chronology of key world events influencing views of the U.S. are also included.

Unfortunately, not every nation is represented. In some cases, there was not enough reliable information, and several nations would not comment due to fears of reciprocity from the U.S. government (these nations are not identified, either). A word of caution—U.S. citizens should prepare to be both revered and insulted. Not recommended reading for thin-skinned patriots; however, a great resource for academic, public, and high-school libraries. The publisher has also set up a Web site, Love U.S./Hate U.S.: What the World Thinks of America [<http://www.loveushateus.com/>], which is described as "a global experiment . . . to tell the world what you think about America and also read what other people think." —Sue Polanka

**YA/C:** This unique compilation may encourage teens to think more broadly about issues and events. **MEQ.**



reference titles that deal with modern social issues: abortion, alcoholism, child abuse, controlled substances, etc. Though it is unique as a single-volume subject encyclopedia on the topic, numerous other titles include some coverage of domestic violence. Is there something about this that makes it stand out and, more specifically, makes it worth the purchase price?

The 138 A–Z entries fall into seven categories, including "Child Abuse and Elder Abuse," "Domestic Violence and the Law," and several others that one might expect from a volume such as this. The category that sets this effort apart from what already exists in the literature is "Cross-Cultural and Religious Perspectives." Not only are there articles on particular American groups (for example, African Americans) and their cultural attitudes with regard to domestic violence but non-American perspectives on domestic violence and its legal implications are presented in several entries on Africa as well as entries on Greece, Spain, and other countries. Also covered are attitudes toward domestic violence from some major religious groups, such as in the entry *Qur'anic perspectives on wife abuse*. The cross-cultural and multicultural fo-

cus of these articles is one of the encyclopedia's strengths. Another category worth noting is "Understudied Areas within Domestic Violence Research," most of which have to do with nontraditional relationships. Examples include *Caregiver violence against people with disabilities*, *Lesbian battering*, and *Male victims of domestic violence and reasons they stay with their abusers*.

Each article is several pages long, with cross-references to other articles in the volume and with substantial bibliographies. The majority of contributors have an academic affiliation, some from foreign universities. There is a thorough and comprehensive index. Academic libraries with a focus on social sciences and large public libraries with substantial social-sciences collections will want to give this volume serious consideration. —Danise Hoover

**Encyclopedia of Religion, Communication, and Media.**

**Ed. by Daniel A. Stout.**

2007. 467p. illus. Routledge, \$150 (9780415969468). 201.

The intended audience for this work, part of the Routledge Encyclopedias of Religion

and Society series, is university students, journalists, and "theorists, or those seeking a deeper more thorough examination of religion and communication." The encyclopedia attempts to bridge the gap that exists between communication theory and anthropology, psychology, sociology, and other disciplines that study religion. To accomplish its goal, it examines such issues as individual communication with deity, the communication aspects of ritual, and the ways in which media have affected religious culture.

Each of the 124 articles fits into one of 5 broad topic areas: "Alternative Religious Movements," "Forms of Communication and Media," "Historical Periods," "Key Concepts," and "Religious Traditions." Entry topics range widely; examples include *Baba'i*, *Humor and laughter*, *Jihad*, *Journalism*, *Native American religion*, *Profane communication*, *Sports*, and *Wicca*. The article *Body decoration* is fairly typical. Continuing over 5 clearly written pages, it explains body decoration in the context of religious history and experience, describes its forms and patterns, and examines its significance as expressed in rites of passage, rituals, festivals, marriage ceremonies, and death. Occasionally, entries include brief sections of primary source material. For example, *Libraries* includes the mission statement of the American Theological Library Association. Entries are accompanied by lists of additional readings and a small number of black-and-white photos.

This is a fine example of a single-volume subject encyclopedia. Furthermore, it does an excellent job treating a highly multidisciplinary topic. It is a recommended purchase for collections that support research on the topic. —Art A. Lichtenstein

**Encyclopedia of the Antarctic.**

**Ed. by Beau Riffenburgh.**

2v. 2007. 1,146p. illus. Routledge, \$425 (9780415970242). 998.

Antarctica is defined politically by the Antarctic Treaty as all areas south of 60 degrees S latitude. Scholars generally consider the boundary to be the Polar Front, an irregularly located current in the Southern Ocean where cold waters meet the warmer waters of the southern Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific oceans. The *Encyclopedia of the Antarctic* covers these areas as well as a few related geographic locations. Editor Riffenburgh is affiliated with the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge. The encyclopedia follows *Encyclopedia of the Arctic*, published by Routledge in 2004.

The detail of coverage is amazing. The nearly 500 articles range from 500 to 6,000 words and cover Antarctic subjects from islands of the region to various animal life, from plankton to sea mammals. Geologic articles on topics such as fossils, plate tectonics, and volcanoes explore the ties the continent has to the rest of the planet. Countries having Antarctic research stations—for instance, Brazil, Finland, and South Africa—each have a separate entry describing the station, its location, and type of research. Polar exploration is heavily represented through biographical